

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 6, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. YULEE submitted the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of S. Van Sickell, J. R. Bellerjeau, and George C. Leidy, post route agents upon third class route from New York to Philadelphia, praying an increase of compensation, beg leave to report :

The petitioners allege that the service to which they have been called is of very great and constantly increasing labor and responsibility, and while other branches of the service have been awarded increase of pay, they seem to have been overlooked ; that their present compensation—viz : \$1,000 per annum—was fixed at a time when rates of labor and prices of food were far less than now ; and they desire an increase of salary proportionable to that of other officers of the government.

The present law under which route agents are compensated gives to the Postmaster General a discretionary power to graduate their salaries according to what he may deem just and proper for the service performed by each, not exceeding one thousand dollars per annum. The petitioners, therefore, receive for their services the highest salary authorized by law. And as it will be seen from the communication of the Postmaster General, hereto annexed, that no difficulty is experienced in procuring the services of capable and efficient persons to perform the service at salaries ranging from six hundred to one thousand dollars ; and in view of the heavy expense necessary to sustain this rapidly increasing branch of the postal service, the committee do not feel warranted in favoring a measure calculated to add in any degree to that expense, and they therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolution :

Resolved, That the prayer of the petitioners ought not to be granted.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
March 8, 1858.

SIR: Your letter of the 23d ultimo, enclosing the petition of S. Van Sickell and others, route agents, which had been referred to the Com-

mittee on Post Offices and Post Roads, has been received, with a request to be favored with my "views upon the matter, and all the information material to the action of the committee."

In answer, I have to state that the present law authorizes the Postmaster General to allow to route agents such compensation as he may deem just and proper, not exceeding one thousand dollars per annum, and that under this law their salaries have been graduated according to the service performed by each. It should also be observed that the department finds no difficulty in procuring the services of capable and efficient persons to discharge these duties, at salaries ranging from six hundred to one thousand dollars; and the numerous and pressing applications for these agencies preclude the idea of any embarrassment as regards compensation in the future.

The multiplication and extension of railroad mail service necessarily adds greatly to the annual expense of the department in the higher rates of pay to railroad companies, and the appointment of additional agents to perform the service.

It affords me pleasure to bear testimony to the efficiency, fidelity, and meritorious character of the corps of route agents, generally, now in the service; and while some of them, no doubt, may be inadequately paid, yet, in view of the foregoing considerations, I do not feel at liberty to recommend any change in the law to authorize a higher rate of compensation to this class of officers, particularly at this time when the state of the treasury is such as to require the strictest economy in the administration of the department.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

AARON V. BROWN,
Postmaster General.

Hon. D. L. YULEE,

Chairman Committee on Post Offices, &c., Washington, D. C.